

Charting the Course to 2002: a Summary of Changes

| TEST | What's the Same | What's Eliminated | What's Included for 2002 |
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| Test 1: Writing Skills (renamed Language Arts: Writing) | 45-minute essay; 3 items types (correction revision, and construction shift); Sentence structure, usage, and mechanics; Information documents ("passages"); Part 1 multiple-choice, and Part II, essay; Examinee must complete both parts. | Spelling--except for homonyms, possessives, and contractions. Commas--only tested when they are used to eliminate confusion | Business Communications (letters, memos, e-mail, reports, applications, etc.); "How to" texts (e.g., dressing for success, leasing a car, planning a trip); both 200-300 words, 12-18 sentences. Organization--transitions, text divisions, topic sentences, and unity/coherence. Length may expand to 250 words. |
| Test 2: Social Studies | Multiple-choice in sets and single items; Measures comprehension, application analysis, and evaluation; Covers history, geography, civics, government, and economics; National, global, and adult contexts; Text and visual sources. | Behavioral science-- psychology, sociology, anthropology--not tested as separate content area; some concepts tested within context of other areas. | More history, civics, and government; More graphics, photographs; More clearly defined content in U.S. and world history; More analysis; Different content areas tested within same item set; More single-item questions; At least one "practical" document (voters' guide, tax form, etc.); At least one excerpt from <i>U.S. Constitution</i> , <i>Declaration of Independence</i> , <i>Federalist Papers</i> , or landmark Supreme Court cases. |
| Test 3: Science | Multiple-choice in sets and single items: Text and visual sources. | More single items, fewer item sets. | Integrated with National Science Education Content Standards; Earth science includes space science; Physical science includes physics and chemistry; Increased focus on environmental and health topics (recycling, heredity, disease prevention, pollution, climate) and on science's relevance to everyday life; 50% conceptual understanding; 50% problem-solving. |
| Test 4: Interpreting Literature and the Arts (renamed Language Arts: Reading) | Reflect diversity--gender, ethnicity, age, region; Passages range from 300-400 words; One poem (8-25 lines) and one piece of drama represented; No graphics viewing addressed in textual manner. | Definitions: Popular Text and Classical Literature redefined as time periods; "Literal comprehension" now "comprehension"; "Inferential comprehension" now "synthesis." | Content areas defined by type of text: Literary (75%) and Nonfiction (25%); At least one comparison/contrast question, Nonfiction will include one business document and one selection about visual representation; 20% comprehension, 15% application, 30-35% analysis, 30-35% synthesis. |

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| Test 5: Mathematics | Measures algebra, geometry, number relations, and data analysis. 25% set-up questions--examinee must identify correct way to solve problem. | "Not sufficient information" questions decreased from 12% to 4%. | More emphasis on data analysis and statistics; Two parts: Part 1 permits calculator, Part II does not; Candidate will have practice time with calculator prior to test; Alternate Format items approximately 20%; Item sets in which candidate must access multiple pieces of information--pie charts, bar graphs, tables. |
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